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Would you "iron" your face?

Thermage, Chinese fire facials, and other crazy (but effective!) things people do for nice skin



We might not ever chance upon the fountain of youth, but in this day and age, Thermage CPT (Comfort Pulse Technology™) makes a pretty good substitute. This non-invasive skin tightening procedure contours the skin without subjecting you to the downsides of a surgical procedure – namely, recovery time, risk of infection, and “ick factor” (we know more than one woman who has renounced facelifts after seeing them on YouTube).

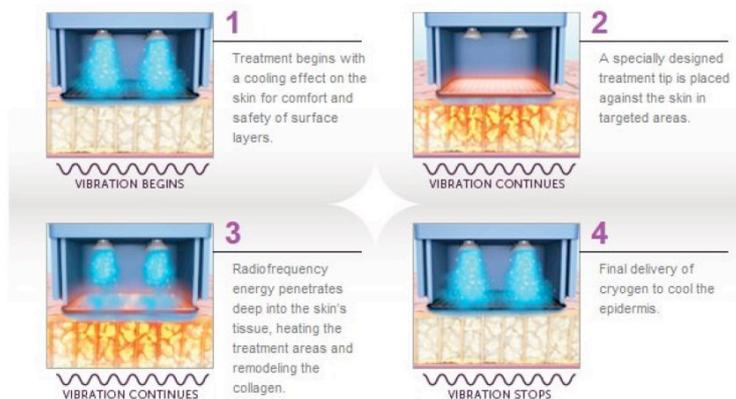
Instead of a scalpel, Thermage uses a vibrating hand piece to deliver radiofrequency into the layers of your skin. *Radio-whaaa?* you ask? In layman's terms, it's a type of focused energy that induces heating into the dermal and subcutaneous layers of skin to help tighten and sculpt its form. Think of it as an iron that helps smooth wrinkles, or even a microwave that restores food to top form.

But if that sounds intimidating, think again. In an email interview with xinmsn, Dr. Chew Khek Kah, founder and Medical Director of NU*U Aesthetics & Wellness Clinic Singapore, gave us a play-by-play for what people who use Thermage CPT can expect from the treatment. For the face, the procedure typically takes 45 minutes, wherein the patient chills out on a chair while the doctor presses his or her face with the handpiece. Targeted areas are split according to small grids.

While the process might feel a little uncomfortable, there's no lasting pain or effects beyond some minor swelling and redness, which usually fades within 24 hours.

“Thermage CPT is definitely a comfortable treatment that offers satisfying results, which can last for a long time,” Dr. Chew said. “The treatment generally achieves results in a single treatment compared to other technologies requiring multiple treatment sessions.”

“Moreover, there is little to no downtime for this treatment and patients can go about their normal activities like shopping or having a meal right after the treatment.”



Sounds pretty simple, right? So why is Thermage still more obscure than surgical face lifts, despite being around for over a decade? While the treatment might not be as heavily advertised (in media and in Hollywood), it's a favourite of perennially youthful-looking actresses like Demi Moore and Gwyneth Paltrow. Even then, words like “radiofrequency” or “zapping” tend to intimidate people who are afraid that the handpiece will burn their skin. By using radiofrequency energy, however, Thermage CPT delivers waves that penetrate the deeper skin tissue without altering the epidermis (or outer layer). This in turn stimulates the production of collagen, which works faster to tighten the skin.

“What's great about the treatment is that it is colourblind, meaning any skin type will see results from the treatment,” Dr. Chew said. “Additionally, people with sensitive skin are also suitable for this treatment.”

Best of all, depending on which areas you target, one session of Thermage CPT can take merely 20 minutes to two hours – but it can stimulate the production of new natural collagen for up to six months. And you'll also avoid that "pulled" look characteristic of people who have undergone facelifts or Botox treatments. So would we get Thermage? Would we "iron our faces," as the Daily Mail once called it? Sure, maybe in about 20 years, once our jowls start to sag. Goodness knows that women do crazier things for the sake of looking youthful!

Click through our gallery to see other dramatic, somewhat crazy procedures that people use to maintain good skin.

*Thermage CPT treatment is available at NU*U Aesthetics & Wellness Clinic in Paragon Medical Suites. Prices range from about S\$1800-S\$2500 for eyes, S\$5000-S\$7000 for the face, and S\$6000 upwards for the body.*

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